



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW

No. DCXV.

MAY 17, 1907.

CHAPTERS FROM MY AUTOBIOGRAPHY—XVIII*

BY MARK TWAIN.

PREFATORY NOTE.—Mr. Clemens began to write his autobiography many years ago, and he continues to add to it day by day. It was his original intention to permit no publication of his memoirs until after his death; but, after leaving "Pier No. 70," he concluded that a considerable portion might now suitably be given to the public. It is that portion, garnered from the quarter-million of words already written, which will appear in this REVIEW during the coming year. No part of the autobiography will be published in book form during the lifetime of the author.—EDITOR N. A. R.

[*Dictated December 21, 1906.*] I wish to insert here some pages of Susy's Biography of me in which the biographer does not scatter, according to her custom, but sticks pretty steadily to a single subject until she has fought it to a finish:

Feb. 27, '86.—Last summer while we were in Elmira an article came out in the "Christian Union" by name "What ought he to have done" treating of the government of children, or rather giving an account of a father's battle with his little baby boy, by the mother of the child and put in the form of a question as to whether the father disciplined the child correctly or not, different people wrote their opinions of the father's behavior, and told what they thought he should have done. Mamma had long known how to discipline children, for in fact the bringing up of children had been one of her specialties for many years.

* Copyright, 1906, by HARPER & BROTHERS. All Rights Reserved.

VOL. CLXXXVI.—NO. 615. 8

Copyright, 1907, by THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW PUBLISHING COMPANY. All Rights Reserved.

She had a great many theories, but one of them was, that if a child was big enough to be nauty, it was big enough to be whipped and here we all agreed with her. I remember one morning when Dr.— came up to the farm he had a long discussion with mamma, upon the following topic. Mamma gave *this* as illustrative of one important rule for punishing a child. She said we will suppose the boy has thrown a handkerchief onto the floor, I tell him to pick it up, he refuses. I tell him again, he refuses. Then I say you must either pick up the handkerchief or have a whipping. My theory is never to make a child have a whipping and pick up the handkerchief too. I say "If you do not pick it up, I must punish you," if he doesn't he gets the whipping, but *I* pick up the handkerchief, if he does he gets no punishment. I tell him to do a thing if he disobeys me he is punished for so doing, but not forced to obey me afterwards.

When Clara and I had been very nauty or were being very nauty, the nurse would go and call Mamma and she would appear suddenly and look at us (she had a way of looking at us when she was displeased as if she could see right through us) till we were ready to sink through the floor from embarrassment, and total absence of knowing what to say. This look was usually followed with "Clara" or "Susy what do you mean by this? do you want to come to the bath-room with me?" Then followed the climax for Clara and I both new only too well what going to the bath-room meant.

But mamma's first and foremost object was to make the child understand that he is being punished for *his* sake, and because the mother so loves him that she cannot allow him to do wrong; also that it is as hard for her to punish him as for him to be punished and even harder. Mamma never allowed herself to punish us when she was angry with us she never struck us because she was enoyed at us and felt like striking us if we had been nauty and had enoyed her, so that she thought she felt or would show the least bit of temper toward us while punnishing us, she always postponed the punishment until *she* was no more chafed by our behavior. She never humored herself by striking or punishing us because or while she was the least bit enoyed with us.

Our very worst nautinesses were punished by being taken to the bath-room and being whipped by the paper cutter. But after the whipping was over, mamma did not allow us to leave her until we were perfectly happy, and perfectly understood why we had been whipped. I never remember having felt the least bit bitterly toward mamma for punishing me. I always felt I had deserved my punishment, and was much happier for having received it. For after mamma had punished us and shown her displeasure, she showed no signs of further displeasure, but acted as if we had not displeased her in any way.

Ordinary punishments answered very well for Susy. She was a thinker, and would reason out the purpose of them, apply the lesson, and achieve the reform required. But it was much less easy to devise punishments that would reform Clara. This was

because she was a philosopher who was always turning her attention to finding something good and satisfactory and entertaining in everything that came her way; consequently it was sometimes pretty discouraging to the troubled mother to find that after all her pains and thought in inventing what she meant to be a severe and reform-compelling punishment, the child had entirely missed the severities through her native disposition to get interest and pleasure out of them as novelties. The mother, in her anxiety to find a penalty that would take sharp hold and do its work effectively, at last resorted, with a sore heart, and with a reproachful conscience, to that punishment which the incorrigible criminal in the penitentiary dreads above all the other punitive miseries which the warden inflicts upon him for his good—solitary confinement in the dark chamber. The grieved and worried mother shut Clara up in a very small clothes-closet and went away and left her there—for fifteen minutes—it was all that the mother-heart could endure. Then she came softly back and listened—listened for the sobs, but there weren't any; there were muffled and inarticulate sounds, but they could not be construed into sobs. The mother waited half an hour longer; by that time she was suffering so intensely with sorrow and compassion for the little prisoner that she was not able to wait any longer for the distressed sounds which she had counted upon to inform her when there had been punishment enough and the reform accomplished. She opened the closet to set the prisoner free and take her back into her loving favor and forgiveness, but the result was not the one expected. The captive had manufactured a fairy cavern out of the closet, and friendly fairies out of the clothes hanging from the hooks, and was having a most sinful and unrepentant good time, and requested permission to spend the rest of the day there!

From Susy's Biography of Me.

But Mamma's opinions and ideas upon the subject of bringing up children has always been more or less of a joke in our family, particularly since Papa's article in the "Christian Union," and I am sure Clara and I have related the history of our old family paper-cutter, our punishments and privations with rather more pride and triumph than any other sentiment, because of Mamma's way of rearing us.

When the article "What ought he to have done?" came out Mamma read it, and was very much interested in it. And when papa heard that she had read it he went to work and secretly wrote his opinion

of what the father ought to have done. He told Aunt Susy, Clara and I, about it but mamma was not to see it or hear any thing about it till it came out. He gave it to Aunt Susy to read, and after Clara and I had gone up to get ready for bed he brought it up for us to read. He told what he thought the father ought to have done by telling what mamma would have done. The article was a beautiful tribute to mamma and every word in it true. But still in writing about mamma he partly forgot that the article was going to be published, I think, and expressed himself more fully than he would do the second time he wrote it; I think the article has done and will do a great deal of good, and I think it would have been perfect for the family and friend's enjoyment, but a little bit too private to have been published as it was. And Papa felt so too, because the very next day or a few days after, he went down to New York to see if he couldn't get it back before it was published but it was too late, and he had to return without it. When the Christian Union reached the farm' and papa's article in it all ready and waiting to be read to mamma papa hadn't the courage to show it to her (for he knew she wouldn't like it at all) at first, and he didn't but he might have let it go and never let her see it, but finally he gave his consent to her seeing it, and told Clara and I we could take it to her, which we did, with tardiness, and we all stood around mamma while she read it, all wondering what she would say and think about it.

She was too much surprised, (and pleased privately, too) to say much at first, but as we all expected publicly, (or rather when she remembered that this article was to be read by every one that took the Christian Union) she was rather shocked and a little displeased.

Clara and I had great fun the night papa gave it to us to read and then hide, so mamma couldn't see it, for just as we were in the midst of reading it mamma appeared papa following anxiously and asked why we were not in bed? then a scuffle ensued for we told her it was a secret and tried to hide it; but she chased us wherever we went, till she thought it was time for us to go to bed, then she surrendered and left us to tuck it under Clara's mattress.

A little while after the article was published letters began to come in to papa criticisizing it, there were some very pleasant ones but a few very disagreeable. One of these, the very worst, mamma got hold of and read, to papa's great regret, it was full of the most disagreeble things, and so very enoying to papa that he for a time felt he must do something to show the author of it his great displeasure at being so insulted. But he finally decided not to, because he felt the man had some cause for feeling enoyed at, for papa had spoken of him, (he was the baby's father) rather slightly in his Christian Union Article.

After all this, papa and mamma both wished I think they might never hear or be spoken to on the subject of the Christian Union article, and whenever any has spoken to me and told me "How much they did enjoy my father's article in the Christian Union" I almost laughed in

their faces when I remembered what a great variety of opinions had been expressed upon the subject of the Christian Union article of papa's.

The article was written in July or August and just the other day papa received quite a bright letter from a gentleman who has read the C. U. article and gave his opinion of it in these words.

It is missing. She probably put the letter between the leaves of the Biography and it got lost out. She threw away the hostile letters, but tried to keep the pleasantest one for her book; surely there has been no kindlier biographer than this one. Yet to a quite creditable degree she is loyal to the responsibilities of her position as historian—not eulogist—and honorably gives me a quiet prod now and then. But how many, many, many she has withheld that I deserved! I could prize them now; there would be no acid in her words, and it is loss to me that she did not set them all down. Oh, Susy, you sweet little biographer, you break my old heart with your gentle charities!

I think a great deal of her work. Her canvases are on their easels, and her brush flies about in a care-free and random way, delivering a dash here, a dash there and another yonder, and one might suppose that there would be no definite result; on the contrary I think that an intelligent reader of her little book must find that by the time he has finished it he has somehow accumulated a pretty clear and nicely shaded idea of the several members of this family—including Susy herself—and that the random dashes on the canvases have developed into portraits. I feel that my own portrait, with some of the defects fined down and others left out, is here; and I am sure that any who knew the mother will recognize her without difficulty, and will say that the lines are drawn with a just judgment and a sure hand. Little creature though Susy was, the penetration which was born in her finds its way to the surface more than once in these pages.

Before Susy began the Biography she let fall a remark now and then concerning my character which showed that she had it under observation. In the Record which we kept of the children's sayings there is an instance of this. She was twelve years old at the time. We had established a rule that each member of the family must bring a fact to breakfast—a fact drawn from a book or from any other source; any fact would answer. Susy's first contribution was in substance as follows. Two great exiles

and former opponents in war met in Ephesus—Scipio and Hannibal. Scipio asked Hannibal to name the greatest general the world had produced.

“Alexander”—and he explained why.

“And the next greatest?”

“Pyrrhus”—and he explained why.

“But where do you place yourself, then?”

“If I had conquered you I would place myself before the others.”

Susy’s grave comment was—

“That *attracted* me, it was just like papa—he is so frank about his books.”

So frank in admiring them, she meant.

[*Thursday, March 28, 1907.*] Some months ago I commented upon a chapter of Susy’s Biography wherein she very elaborately discussed an article about the training and disciplining of children, which I had published in the “Christian Union” (this was twenty-one years ago), an article which was full of worshipful praises of Mrs. Clemens as a mother, and which little Clara, and Susy, and I had been hiding from this lovely and admirable mother because we knew she would disapprove of public and printed praises of herself. At the time that I was dictating these comments, several months ago, I was trying to call back to my memory some of the details of that article, but I was not able to do it, and I wished I had a copy of the article so that I could see what there was about it which gave it such large interest for Susy.

Yesterday afternoon I elected to walk home from the luncheon at the St. Regis, which is in 55th Street and Fifth Avenue, for it was a fine spring day and I hadn’t had a walk for a year or two, and felt the need of exercise. As I walked along down Fifth Avenue the desire to see that “Christian Union” article came into my head again. I had just reached the corner of 42nd Street then, and there was the usual jam of wagons, carriages, and automobiles there. I stopped to let it thin out before trying to cross the street, but a stranger, who didn’t require as much room as I do, came racing by and darted into a crack among the vehicles and made the crossing. But on his way past me he thrust a couple of ancient newspaper clippings into my hand, and said,

"There, you don't know me, but I have saved them in my scrap-book for twenty years, and it occurred to me this morning that perhaps you would like to see them, so I was carrying them down-town to mail them, I not expecting to run across you in this accidental way, of course; but I will give them into your own hands now. Good-by!"—and he disappeared among the wagons.

Those scraps which he had put into my hand were ancient newspaper copies of that "Christian Union" article! It is a handsome instance of mental telegraphy—or if it isn't that, it is a handsome case of coincidence.

From the Biography.

March 14th, '86.—Mr. Laurence Barrette and Mr. and Mrs. Hutton were here a little while ago, and we had a very interesting visit from them. Papa said Mr. Barrette never had acted so well before when he had seen him, as he did the first night he was staying with us. And Mrs.—— said she never had seen an actor on the stage, whom she more wanted to speak with.

Papa has been very much interested of late, in the "Mind Cure" theory. And in fact so have we all. A young lady in town has worked wonders, by using the "Mind Cure" upon people; she is constantly busy now curing peoples diseases in this way—and curing her own even, which to me seems the most remarkable of all.

A little while past, papa was delighted with the knowledge of what he thought the best way of curing a cold, which was by starving it. This starving did work beautifully, and freed him from a great many severe colds. Now he says it wasn't the starving that helped his colds, but the trust in the starving, the mind cure connected with the starving.

I shouldn't wonder if we finally became firm believers in Mind Cure. The next time papa has a cold, I haven't a doubt, he will send for Miss H—— the young lady who is doctoring in the "Mind Cure" theory, to cure him of it.

Mamma was over at Mrs. George Warners to lunch the other day, and Miss H—— was there too. Mamma asked if anything as natural as near sightedness could be cured she said oh yes just as well as other diseases.

When mamma came home, she took me into her room, and told me that perhaps my near-sightedness could be cured by the "Mind Cure" and that she was going to have me try the treatment any way, there could be no harm in it, and there might be great good. If her plan succeeds there certainly will be a great deal in "Mind Cure" to my opinion, for I am *very* near sighted and so is mamma, and I never expected there could be any more cure for it than for blindness, but now I don't know but what theres a cure for *that*.

It was a disappointment; her near-sightedness remained with

her to the end. She was born with it, no doubt; yet, strangely enough, she must have been four years old, and possibly five, before we knew of its existence. It is not easy to understand how that could have happened. I discovered the defect by accident. I was half-way up the hall stairs one day at home, and was leading her by the hand, when I glanced back through the open door of the dining-room and saw what I thought she would recognize as a pretty picture. It was "Stray Kit," the slender, the graceful, the sociable, the beautiful, the incomparable, the cat of cats, the tortoise-shell, curled up as round as a wheel and sound asleep on the fire-red cover of the dining-table, with a brilliant stream of sunlight falling across her. I exclaimed about it, but Susy said she could see nothing there, neither cat nor table-cloth. The distance was so slight—not more than twenty feet, perhaps—that if it had been any other child I should not have credited the statement.

From the Biography.

March 14th, '86.—Clara sprained her ankle, a little while ago, by running into a tree, when coasting, and while she was unable to walk with it she played solitaire with cards a great deal. While Clara was sick and papa saw her play solitaire so much, he got very much interested in the game, and finally began to play it himself a little, then Jean took it up, and at last *mamma*, even played it occasionally; Jean's and papa's love for it rapidly increased, and now Jean brings the cards every night to the table and papa and mamma help her play, and before dinner is at an end, papa has gotten a separate pack of cards, and is playing alone, with great interest. Mamma and Clara next are made subject to the contagious solitaire, and there are four solitaireans at the table; while you hear nothing but "Fill up the place" etc. It is dreadful! after supper Clara goes into the library, and gets a little red mahogany table, and placing it under the gas fixture seats herself and begins to play again, then papa follows with another table of the same description, and they play solitaire till bedtime.

We have just had our Prince and Pauper pictures taken; two groups and some little single ones. The groups (the Interview and Lady Jane Grey scene) were pretty good, the lady Jane scene was perfect, just as pretty as it could be, the Interview was not so good; and two of the little single pictures were very good indeed, but one was very bad. Yet on the whole we think they were a success.

Papa has done a great deal in his life I think, that is good, and very remarkable, but I think if he had had the advantages with which he could have developed the gifts which he has made no use of in writing his books, or in any other way for other peoples pleasure and benefit

outside of his own family and intimate friends, he could have done *more* than he has and a great deal more even. He is known to the public as a humorist, but he has much more in him that is earnest than that is humorous. He has a keen sense of the ludicrous, notices funny stories and incidents knows how to tell them, to improve upon them, and does not forget them. He has been through a great many of the funny adventures related in "Tom Sayer" and in "Huckleberry Finn," *himself* and he lived among just such boys, and in just such villages all the days of his early life. His "Prince and Pauper" is his most original, and best production; it shows the most of any of his books what kind of pictures are in his mind, usually. Not that the pictures of England in the 16th Century and the adventures of a little prince and pauper are the kind of things he mainly thinks about; but that *that* book, and those pictures represent the train of thought and imagination he would be likely to be thinking of to-day, to-morrow, or next day, more nearly than those given in "Tom Sawyer" or "Huckleberry Finn."*

Papa can make exceedingly bright jokes, and he enjoys funny things, and when he is with people he jokes and laughs a great deal, but still he is more interested in earnest books and earnest subjects to talk upon, than in humorous ones.†

When we are all alone at home, nine times out of ten, he talks about some very earnest subjects, (with an occasional joke thrown in) and he a good deal more often talks upon such subjects than upon the other kind.

He is as much of a Philosopher as anything I think. I think he could have done a great deal in this direction if he had studied while young, for he seems to enjoy reasoning out things, no matter what; in a great many such directions he has greater ability than in the gifts which have made him famous.

Thus at fourteen she had made up her mind about me, and in no timorous or uncertain terms had set down her reasons for her opinion. Fifteen years were to pass before any other critic—except Mr. Howells, I think—was to reutter that daring opinion and print it. Right or wrong, it was a brave position for that little analyzer to take. She never withdrew it afterward, nor modified it. She has spoken of herself as lacking physical courage, and has evinced her admiration of Clara's; but she had moral courage, which is the rarest of human qualities, and she kept it functional by exercising it. I think that in questions of morals

* It is so yet.—M. T.

† She has said it well and correctly. Humor is a subject which has never had much interest for me. This is why I have never examined it, nor written about it nor used it as a topic for a speech. A hundred times it has been offered me as a topic in these past forty years, but in no case has it attracted me.—M. T.

and politics she was usually on my side; but when she was not she had her reasons and maintained her ground. Two years after she passed out of my life I wrote a Philosophy. Of the three persons who have seen the manuscript only one understood it, and all three condemned it. If she could have read it, she also would have condemned it, possibly,—probably, in fact—but she would have understood it. It would have had no difficulties for her on that score; also she would have found a tireless pleasure in analyzing and discussing its problems.

MARK TWAIN.

(To be Continued.)